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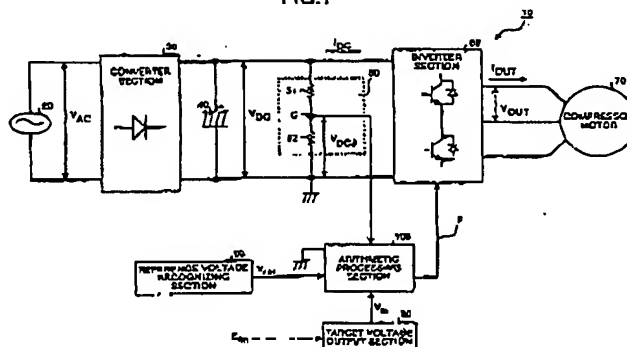
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(54) INVERTER CONTROLLER

(57) Provided are, a converter section (30) which converts a commercial AC voltage (V_{AC}) into a DC voltage (V_{DC}); an inverter section (60) which converts the DC voltage (V_{DC}) into an output AC voltage (V_{OUT}) of a predetermined frequency by a pulse-width modulation system based on an assigned PWM width, and supplies the output AC voltage (V_{OUT}) to a compressor motor

(70). Further, an instantaneous DC voltage detecting section (50) detects an instantaneous DC voltage (V_{DCS}), and an arithmetic processing section (100) corrects the PWM width so as to maintain the output AC voltage (V_{OUT}) at a desired value following the variation in the instantaneous DC voltage (V_{DCS}). It is possible to operate a compressor motor (70) in an optimum state of load characteristics and efficiency.

FIG.1



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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention in general relates to an inverter control apparatus used in air conditioners. More particularly, this invention relates to an inverter control apparatus for controlling a compressor motor.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] The air conditioner comprises an indoor unit (placed inside a house) and an outdoor unit (placed outside the house). Conventionally, in the outdoor unit of the air conditioner, there has been provided an inverter control apparatus for controlling a compressor motor (an induction motor, a DC brushless motor, etc.) that is driven by an output AC voltage. The output AC voltage is obtained as follows. A converter and a smoothing capacitor once converts a commercial AC voltage into a DC voltage, and the inverter again converts the DC voltage into the output AC voltage by a PWM (Pulse Width Modulation) control.

[0003] The conventional converter is provided with a diode bridge circuit, and this converter converts a commercial AC voltage into a DC voltage. The smoothing capacitor is connected in parallel to the converter, and smoothes the DC voltage that has been obtained by the conversion of the converter. The inverter is composed of a switching element like a switching transistor. This inverter is a three-phase inverter that converts the DC voltage into an output AC voltage of a three-phase AC having a predetermined frequency by the PWM control for ON/OFF controlling the switching element at a predetermined timing. This inverter is input with a PWM switching pattern for instructing a switching timing of the switching element.

[0004] This PWM switching pattern is generated based on a target voltage corresponding to the operation frequency of the compressor motor by a known V/F (Voltage/Frequency) control. The operation frequency takes a value according to an air-conditioning load. For example, the operation frequency takes a large value when there is a large difference between a set temperature of the air conditioner and a room temperature.

[0005] The output AC voltage from the inverter is expressed as a surface area (i.e. surface area S) that is a product of a DC voltage V_{DC} and a PWM width W as shown in Fig. 7. In the PWM control, the PWM width W is controlled so that the output AC voltage coincides with the target voltage. The DC voltage V_{DC} shown in this drawing is a DC voltage that has been smoothed by the smoothing capacitor, and the PWM width W corresponds to a period during which the switching element of the inverter is ON.

[0006] When the commercial AC voltage is supplied to the converter, the converter full-wave rectifies this commercial AC voltage to convert this voltage into the DC voltage. Then, the smoothing capacitor smoothes this DC voltage, and supplies the smoothed DC voltage to the inverter.

[0007] In this case, the PWM width W is calculated from the DC voltage V_{DC} and the target voltage (i.e. the surface area S) shown in Fig. 7. In other words, the PWM width W is a result of dividing the target voltage by the DC voltage V_{DC} . In this calculation of the PWM width W , the DC voltage V_{DC} is handled as a constant value. A PWM switching pattern corresponding to the PWM width W is input to the inverter.

[0008] Based on the above arrangement, the inverter ON/OFF controls the switching element at a predetermined timing according to the PWM switching pattern, thereby to convert the DC voltage into the output AC voltage having a predetermined PWM width. This output AC voltage is supplied to the compressor motor so that the compressor motor is driven.

[0009] As mentioned above, in the conventional inverter control apparatus, the DC voltage V_{DC} is handled as a constant value for calculating the PWM width shown in Fig. 7. However, in reality, the commercial AC voltage varies, therefore, the DC voltage V_{DC} also varies.

[0010] Therefore, according to the conventional inverter control apparatus, there arises a difference between the PWM width W calculated and a theoretical value for carrying out an optimum control, when the DC voltage V_{DC} has varied. In other words, the PWM width is calculated as a constant value regardless of a variation in the DC voltage V_{DC} shown in Fig. 7 following the variation in the commercial AC voltage. As a result, there arises a situation that the output AC voltage (corresponding to the area S) actually supplied from the inverter to the compressor motor cannot follow the target voltage.

[0011] Figs. 8 (A) and (B) show a case where an output AC voltage V_{OUT} from the inverter varies following the variation in the DC voltage V_{DC} . Fig. 8 (A) shows a state that although it is desirable that the DC voltage V_{DC} takes a constant value, the DC voltage V_{DC} increases along lapse of time and then decreases, due to the influence of the variation in the commercial AC voltage. When the DC voltage V_{DC} has varied like this, an output AC average voltage V_{AOUT} that is a time-averaged output AC voltage V_{OUT} also varies as shown in Fig. 8 (B).

[0012] As explained above, according to the conventional inverter control apparatus, the PWM width W is calculated based on the DC voltage V_{DC} as a constant value, despite the fact that the V_{DC} varies every moment from a DC voltage

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V_{DC1} to a DC voltage V_{DC2} , ..., and to a DC voltage V_{DC5} , as shown in the drawing. Therefore, surface areas S_1 to S_5 of output AC voltage elements V_1' to V_5' also take different values respectively.

[0013] As a result, the conventional inverter control apparatus has had the following problem. When the DC voltage V_{DC} has varied following the variation in the commercial AC voltage, the output AC voltage V_{OUT}' that is supplied from the inverter to the compressor motor is deviated from the target voltage. As a result, it has not been possible to carry out an optimum operation of the compressor motor.

[0014] Particularly, when the commercial AC voltage has decreased suddenly, the output AC voltage V_{OUT}' becomes less than a minimum rated voltage of the compressor motor, which is a voltage shortage state. This results in an occurrence of a stalling. On the other hand, when the commercial AC voltage has increased suddenly, the output AC voltage V_{OUT}' exceeds a maximum rated voltage of the compressor motor, which is an overvoltage state. This results in a flow of an excess current to operate the protection circuit, and stops the operation of the compressor motor (a stop due to an overcurrent).

[0015] The power source situations (rated values, and stability, etc. of a commercial AC voltage,) in the world are different between the countries (regions). Therefore, in countries where the stability of the commercial AC voltage is low, the use of the conventional inverter control apparatus can easily invite the occurrence of the above-described voltage shortage and overvoltage. Therefore, the risk of a frequent occurrence of the stalling and a stop due to an overcurrent becomes very high. In other words, according to the conventional inverter control apparatus, there has been a problem that the stability of the control of the compressor motor is easily controlled by the power source situation.

[0016] A DC current I_{DC} shown in Fig. 9 (A) includes a ripple I_{R1} , as the inverter control apparatus uses a low-cost circuit for reducing the cost of. This DC current I_{DC} is a voltage that has been smoothed by the smoothing capacitor. The size of the ripple I_{R1} is determined by a circuit constant and the load.

[0017] According to the conventional inverter control apparatus, the DC current I_{DC} that includes the ripple I_{R1} shown in Fig. 9 (A) is switched by the PWM control. Therefore, an output AC current I_{OUT}' from the inverter shown in Fig. 9 (B) also includes a ripple I_{R2}' . A peak value of this ripple I_{R2}' corresponds to a peak value of the ripple I_{R1} (reference Fig. 9 (A)).

[0018] From the above, the conventional inverter control apparatus has had also the following problems. It is necessary to use an overcurrent protection circuit that breaks a DC when the DC flowing through the switching element of the inverter exceeds a threshold value, and to use a switching element that has a large capacity and high precision. This has been expensive.

[0019] It is an object of the present invention to provide an inverter control apparatus capable of operating an AC load at low cost and in an optimum state, and also capable of operating the AC load in an optimum state under any power source situation.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

[0020] The inverter control apparatus according to this invention comprises a converting unit which converts a commercial AC voltage into a DC voltage; an inverting unit which converts the DC voltage into an output AC voltage of a predetermined frequency by a pulse-width modulation system based on an assigned pulse width, and supplies the output AC voltage to an AC load; an instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit which detects an instantaneous value of the DC voltage; and a correcting unit which corrects the pulse width so as to maintain the output AC voltage at a desired value following the variation in a result of a detection by the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit.

[0021] Thus, in the inverter control apparatus of this invention, the instantaneous value of a DC voltage also varies following the variation in a commercial AC voltage. This variation in the instantaneous value of the DC voltage is also reflected in a result of a detection carried out by an instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit. Then, the correcting unit corrects the pulse width following the variation in the detection result. As a result, the output AC voltage supplied from the inverting unit to the AC load is maintained at a desired value without receiving an influence of the variation in the instantaneous value of the DC voltage following the variation in the commercial AC voltage.

[0022] In other words, it is possible to supply an output AC voltage of a desired value to the AC load without receiving an influence of the variation in the commercial AC voltage. As a result, it is possible to operate the AC load in an optimum state of load characteristics and efficiency.

[0023] Further, it is preferable that the correcting unit corrects the pulse width based on a result of multiplying a ratio of a preset reference voltage to a detection result of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit, and a target voltage as a target value of the output AC voltage.

[0024] Thus, the correcting unit corrects the pulse width based on a result of multiplying a ratio of a reference voltage to a detection result of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit, and a target voltage. Therefore, it is possible to supply an output AC voltage of a desired value to the AC load without receiving an influence of the variation in the commercial AC voltage. As a result, it is possible to operate the AC load in an optimum state of load characteristics and efficiency.

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[0025] Further, the inverter control apparatus may further comprise a setting changing unit which changes a setting of the reference voltage according to the commercial AC voltage.

[0026] Thus, the setting changing unit changes the setting of the reference voltage according to the commercial AC voltage. Therefore, it is possible to supply an output AC voltage of a desired value to the AC load in countries and regions where the power source situations (rated values, and stability, etc. of a commercial AC voltage,) are different. As a result, it is possible to operate the AC load in an optimum state regardless of countries and regions.

[0027] Further, it is preferable that the correcting unit corrects the pulse width by calculating the ratio for every one period of a modulation carrier in the pulse-width modulation system.

[0028] Thus, the pulse width is corrected for every one period of a modulation carrier. Therefore, as the influence of the ripple included in the commercial AC voltage is reduced, it is possible to avoid a current breaking due to an overcurrent attributable to the ripple, and it is also possible to increase the reliability. Further, it is possible to lower the cost (an overcurrent breaking circuit) for avoiding the ripple.

[0029] Further, it is preferable that the correcting unit corrects the pulse width by calculating the ratio for every n periods (n is equal to or above 2) of a modulation carrier in the pulse-width modulation system.

[0030] Thus, the ratio (a reference voltage / a detection result of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit) is calculated for every n periods of a modulation carrier. Therefore, it is possible to decrease the number of calculating the ratio per unit time, as compared with the case of calculating the ratio for every one period. As a result, it is possible to lower the cost as the correction can be realized by a low-cost arithmetic and logic unit.

[0031] Further, it is preferable that the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit directly detects the DC voltage by a non-insulating circuit that has been grounded to be in a potential common to that of the correcting unit.

[0032] Accordingly, it is possible to shorten the detection time, as compared with the case of detecting a DC voltage using an insulating circuit like a photo-coupler or the like.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0033]

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing a structure of a first embodiment relating to the present invention; Fig. 2 is a diagram showing a power source voltage and a reference voltage V_{ref} in Europe, China and Australia respectively; Fig. 3 is a diagram showing a V/F pattern data; Fig. 4 is a diagram showing a waveform of an output AC voltage V_{OUT} shown in Fig. 1; Fig. 5 is a flowchart for explaining the operation of the first embodiment; Fig. 6 is a flowchart for explaining the operation of a second embodiment; Fig. 7 is a diagram for explaining a method of determining the output AC voltage in a conventional inverter control apparatus; Fig. 8 is a diagram for explaining problems of the conventional inverter control apparatus and effects of the first embodiment; and Fig. 9 is a diagram for explaining problems of the conventional inverter control apparatus and effects of the first embodiment.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

[0034] Preferred embodiments of this invention will be explained in detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0035] Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing a structure of a first embodiment relating to the present invention. The inverter control apparatus 10 shown in this figure is provided in the outdoor unit of the air conditioner. The inverter control apparatus 10 is for converting a commercial AC voltage V_{AC} into a DC voltage V_{DC} , and then inversely converting this DC voltage V_{DC} into an output AC voltage V_{OUT} of a desired three-phase AC, thereby to control a compressor motor 70.

[0036] In this inverter control apparatus 10, a commercial AC power source 20 supplies the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} to a converter section 30. The commercial AC voltage V_{AC} supplied from the commercial AC power source 20 is different depending on the country in the world because of differences in the power source situations, and the laws relating to power supply business between the countries.

[0037] For example, in Europe, the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} is within the range from 220 to 240 V \pm 10% as described in the column of "Power source voltage in Europe" as shown in Fig. 2 (A). In China, the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} is within the range of 220 V \pm 10% as described in the column of "Power source voltage in China" as shown in Fig. 2 (B). Further, in Australia, the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} is within the range of 240 V \pm 10% as described in the column of "Power source voltage in Australia" as shown in Fig. 2 (C).

[0038] Referring back to Fig. 1, the converter section 30 is composed of a diode bridge circuit connected in parallel to the commercial AC power source 20, to convert the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} into the DC voltage. A smoothing capacitor 40 is connected in parallel to the converter section 30, to smooth the DC voltage obtained by conversion by the converter section 30. An inter-terminal voltage of the smoothing capacitor 40 is a DC voltage V_{DC} after the smooth-

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ing. This DC voltage V_{DC} varies by receiving the influence of the variation in the commercial AC power source 20.

[0039] An instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50 is connected in parallel to the smoothing capacitor 40, and is composed of a voltage-dividing resistor 51 and a voltage-dividing resistor 52 that are connected in series. This instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50 detects an instantaneous value of the DC voltage V_{DC} as a divided instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} . In other words, the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} is a voltage between the ground and a connection point C between the voltage-dividing resistor 51 and the voltage-dividing resistor 52. This voltage has a size (equal to or above 0 V and less than 5 V) that can be directly processed by an A/D (Analog/Digital) conversion port (not shown) of an arithmetic processing section 100 to be described later. In the following explanation, the DC voltage V_{DC} and the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} will be explained to have the same value, for the sake of the convenience of the explanation.

[0040] An inverter section 60 has a switching element like a power transistor, an IPM (Intelligent Power Module), and the like. This is a three-phase inverter that converts a DC voltage V_{DC} into an output AC voltage V_{OUT} of a three-phase AC having a predetermined frequency by a PWM control for ON/OFF controlling the switching element at a predetermined timing.

[0041] The IPM accommodates the switching element, a driving circuit, a protection circuit, etc. in one module. This is means for systematizing the power device and for making the power device intelligent. The compressor motor 70 is provided in the outdoor unit (not shown) of the air conditioner, and is driven by the three-phase output AC voltage V_{OUT} supplied from the inverter section 60. An induction motor, a DC brushless motor, etc. are used as the compressor motor 70.

[0042] A target voltage output section 80 outputs a target voltage V_m corresponding to an operation frequency f_m obtained from an operation frequency command signal S_m by a known V/F (Voltage/Frequency) control. The operation frequency f_m takes a value according to an air-conditioning load. For example, this value becomes large when there is a large difference between a set temperature of the air conditioner and a room temperature. The operation frequency command signal S_m is a signal corresponding to the operation frequency f_m . The target voltage V_m is a voltage that takes an optimum value with respect to the operation frequency f_m , and the target voltage V_m is obtained from V/F pattern data shown in Fig. 3.

[0043] The target voltage V_m is used for calculating a PWM width W to be described later. The V/F pattern data shown in this drawing shows a relationship between the operation frequency f_m in the horizontal axis and the target voltage V_m in the vertical axis. The V/F pattern data has characteristics capable of most efficiently control the compressor motor 70. This V/F pattern data is stored in a memory (not shown) of the target voltage output section 80.

[0044] Referring back to Fig. 1, a reference voltage setting section 90 is for setting the reference voltage V_{ref} to an arithmetic processing section 100. This V_{ref} corresponds to a rated value (= constant) of the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} , and takes a value corresponding to the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} (power source situation) in each country (region) of the world. For example, the reference voltage V_{ref} in Europe is 230×1.414 V shown in Fig. 2 (A). The reference voltage V_{ref} in China is 220×1.414 V shown in Fig. 2 (B). Further, the reference voltage V_{ref} in Australia is 240×1.414 V. As explained above, the reference voltage setting section 90 sets the reference voltage V_{ref} that conforms to the corresponding country according to the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} in each country of the world.

[0045] Referring back to Fig. 1, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates a PWM switching pattern signal P based on the target voltage V_m from the target voltage output section 80, and outputs this to the inverter section 60. This PWM switching pattern signal P is for controlling the timing of turning ON/OFF the switching element of the inverter section 60. In other words, this PWM switching pattern signal P is for controlling the PWM width of the output AC voltage V_{OUT} .

[0046] In actual practice, the arithmetic processing section 100 is not simply generating the PWM switching pattern signal P from the target voltage V_m . Instead, the arithmetic processing section 100 corrects the target voltage V_m (a corrected target voltage V_{ma}) using a DC voltage correction coefficient A for correcting the variation of the DC voltage V_{DC} , and generates the PWM switching pattern signal P from this result.

[0047] Specifically, the arithmetic processing section 100 calculates the DC voltage correction coefficient A from the following equation (1), and then calculates the corrected target voltage V_{ma} from the following equation (2).

$$\text{DC voltage correction coefficient } A = \text{Reference voltage } V_{ref} / \text{Instantaneous DC voltage } V_{DCS} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Corrected target voltage } V_{ma} = \text{Target voltage } V_m \times \text{DC voltage correction coefficient } A \quad (2)$$

[0048] The corrected target voltage V_{ma} of the equation (2) is the target voltage V_m that has been corrected based on the variation of the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (the DC voltage V_{DC}). For example, when the commercial AC

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voltage V_{AC} has become higher than the rated value, the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (the DC voltage V_{DC}) becomes higher than the reference voltage V_{ref} . In this case, the DC voltage correction coefficient A becomes less than 1, so that the corrected target voltage V_{ma} becomes less than the target voltage V_m . In other words, when the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} has become higher than the reference voltage V_{ref} , the corrected target voltage V_{ma} is set to have a lower value than the target voltage V_m .

[0049] On the other hand, when the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} has become lower than the rated value, the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (the DC voltage V_{DC}) becomes lower than the reference voltage V_{ref} . In this case, the DC voltage correction coefficient A becomes larger than 1, so that the corrected target voltage V_{ma} becomes higher than the target voltage V_m . In other words, when the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} has become lower than the reference voltage V_{ref} , the corrected target voltage V_{ma} is set to have a higher value than the target voltage V_m .

[0050] Further, when the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} has become equal to the rated value, the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (the DC voltage V_{DC}) takes the same value as the reference voltage V_{ref} . In this case, the DC voltage correction coefficient A becomes 1, so that the corrected target voltage V_{ma} becomes equal to the target voltage V_m .

[0051] After the arithmetic processing section 100 has divided the corrected target voltage V_{ma} by the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} and obtained the PWM width from this result, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates the PWM switching pattern signal P corresponding to this PWM width, and outputs this signal to the inverter section 60. The arithmetic processing section 100 is also grounded to take the same potential as that of one end portion of the voltage-dividing resistor 52.

[0052] Next, the operation of the first embodiment will be explained with reference to a flowchart shown in Fig. 5. First, the reference voltage setting section 90 shown in Fig. 1 sets to the arithmetic processing section 100 the reference voltage V_{ref} that conforms to the power source situation (the commercial AC voltage) of the country (region) in which the air conditioner is used.

[0053] For example, when the air conditioner is to be used in Europe, the reference voltage setting section 90 sets 230×1.1414 V shown in Fig. 2 (A) as the reference voltage V_{ref} . When the air conditioner is to be used in China, the reference voltage setting section 90 sets 220×1.1414 V shown in Fig. 2 (B) as the reference voltage V_{ref} . Further, when the air conditioner is to be used in Australia, the reference voltage setting section 90 sets 240×1.1414 V as the reference voltage V_{ref} .

[0054] When the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} has been supplied to the converter section 30 from the commercial AC power source 20, the converter section 30 full-wave rectifies this commercial AC voltage V_{AC} . Then, the smoothing capacitor 40 smoothes this commercial AC voltage, and converts it into the DC voltage V_{DC} . In this case, the voltage-dividing resistor 51 and the voltage-dividing resistor 52 of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50 divide the DC voltage V_{DC} , so that the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} between the connection point C and the ground is detected. This instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} is input to an A/D conversion port (not shown) of the arithmetic processing section 100.

[0055] When the operation frequency command signal S_{fm} corresponding to the operation frequency f_m of the compressor motor 7 has been input to the target voltage output section 80, the target voltage output section 80 obtains the target voltage V_m corresponding to the operation frequency f_m from the V/F pattern data shown in Fig. 3, and then outputs this target voltage V_m to the arithmetic processing section 100.

[0056] The arithmetic processing section 100 then proceeds to step SA1 shown in Fig. 5, and makes a decision as to whether the timing of a carrier period has come or not based on a result of the time measured by a timer (not shown). In this case, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "No" as a result of the decision made, and then repeats making the same decision. This carrier period is a period of the carrier (a modulated wave) in the PWM control of the inverter section 60.

[0057] When the timing of the carrier period has come, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SA1, and then proceeds to step SA2. At step SA2, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the target voltage V_m from the target voltage output section 80, and then proceeds to step SA3. It is assumed that the target voltage V_m takes a constant value. At step SA3, the arithmetic processing section 100 directly takes in the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} from the instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50 via the A/D conversion port (not shown), and then proceeds to step SA4.

[0058] At step SA4, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the reference voltage V_{ref} from the reference voltage setting section 90 and the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} taken in at step SA3, into the equation (1), and calculates the DC voltage correction coefficient A . Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SA5.

[0059] In this case, it is assumed that the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} takes a rated value, and that the DC voltage V_{DC} is the DC voltage V_{DC1} (= the reference voltage V_{ref}) shown in Fig. 8 (C). Then, the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (= the DC voltage V_{DC1}) becomes equal to the reference voltage V_{ref} . As a result, the DC voltage correction coefficient A (the reference voltage V_{ref} / the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS}) becomes 1.

[0060] At step SA5, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the target voltage V_m taken in at step SA2 and the DC voltage correction coefficient A (= 1) calculated at step SA4, into the equation (2), thereby to calculate the

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corrected target voltage V_{ma} , and then proceeds to step SA6. In this case, as the DC voltage correction coefficient A is 1, the corrected target voltage V_{ma} becomes equal to the target voltage V_m .

[0061] At step SA6, the arithmetic processing section 100 divides the corrected target voltage V_{ma} by the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (= the DC voltage V_{DC1} ; reference Fig. 8 (C)) taken in at step SA3, and obtains a PWM width W_1 shown in Fig. 8 (C), as a result of this division. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SA7. At step SA7, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates the PWM switching pattern signal P corresponding to the PWM width W_1 . Next, the arithmetic processing section 100 outputs the PWM switching pattern signal P to the inverter section 60, and returns to step SA1. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 repeats making the above decision.

[0062] When the PWM switching pattern signal P has been input to the Inverter section 60, the Inverter section 60 converts the DC voltage V_{DC} (= the DC voltage V_{DC1} ; reference Fig. 8 (C)) into the output AC voltage V_{OUT} , by the PWM control of turning ON/OFF the switching element according to the PWM switching pattern signal P. The inverter section 60 supplies this output AC voltage V_{OUT} to the compressor motor 70. In this case, the PWM width W_1 of an output AC voltage element v_1 in the output AC voltage V_{OUT} is the PWM width that has been calculated at step SA6, as shown in Fig. 8 (C).

[0063] When the timing of the carrier period has come, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SA1, and then proceeds to step SA2. At step SA2, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the target voltage V_m from the target voltage output section 80, and then proceeds to step SA3. At step SA3, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} from the instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50, and then proceeds to step SA4. In this case, it is assumed that the DC voltage V_{DC} has increased from the DC voltage V_{DC1} shown in Fig. 8 (C) to the DC voltage V_{DC2} , due to the increase in the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} .

[0064] At step SA4, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the reference voltage V_{ref} from the reference voltage setting section 90 and the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (= the DC voltage V_{DC2}) taken in at step SA3, into the equation (1), and calculates the DC voltage correction coefficient A. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SA5.

[0065] In this case, it is assumed that the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} takes a higher value than the rated value, and that the DC voltage V_{DC} is the DC voltage V_{DC2} (> the reference voltage V_{ref}) shown in Fig. 8 (C). As a result, the DC voltage correction coefficient A (the reference voltage V_{ref} / the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS}) takes a value less than 1.

[0066] At step SA5, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the target voltage V_m taken in at step SA2 and the DC voltage correction coefficient A (< 1) calculated at step SA4, into the equation (2), thereby to calculate the corrected target voltage V_{ma} , and then proceeds to step SA6. In this case, as the DC voltage correction coefficient A is less than 1, the corrected target voltage V_{ma} becomes less than the target voltage V_m .

[0067] At step SA6, the arithmetic processing section 100 divides the corrected target voltage V_{ma} by the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (= the DC voltage V_{DC2} ; reference Fig. 8 (C)) taken in at step SA3, and obtains a PWM width W_2 shown in Fig. 8 (C), as a result of this division. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SA7. This PWM width W_2 is smaller than the PWM width W_1 that is before the increase of the DC voltage V_{DC} .

[0068] At step SA7, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates the PWM switching pattern signal P corresponding to the PWM width W_2 (< the PWM width W_1). Next, the arithmetic processing section 100 outputs the PWM switching pattern signal P to the inverter section 60, and returns to step SA1. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 repeats making the above decision.

[0069] When the PWM switching pattern signal P has been input to the inverter section 60, the inverter section 60 converts the DC voltage V_{DC} (= the DC voltage V_{DC2} ; reference Fig. 8 (C)) into the output AC voltage V_{OUT} , by the PWM control of turning ON/OFF the switching element according to the PWM switching pattern signal P. The inverter section 60 supplies this output AC voltage V_{OUT} to the compressor motor 70.

[0070] In this case, the PWM width W_2 of an output AC voltage element v_2 in the output AC voltage V_{OUT} is smaller than the PWM width W_1 , contrary to the trend that the DC voltage V_{DC2} is higher than the DC voltage V_{DC1} . In other words, the PWM width W_2 is made smaller than the PWM width W_1 so that the area S of the DC voltage element v_1 becomes equal to the area S of the DC voltage element v_2 . As a result, an output AC average voltage CA_{OUT} that is an average value of the output AC voltage V_{OUT} is maintained at a constant value, regardless of the variation in the DC voltage V_{DC} (the DC voltage V_{DC1} to the DC voltage V_{DC2}) following the variation in the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} .

[0071] Thereafter, the above-described operation is repeated for every one-carrier period, at step SA1 to step SA7. Based on this operation, a PWM width W_3 to a PWM width W_5 are varied according to an increase and a decrease in DC voltages V_{DC3} to V_{DC5} so that all the areas S in output AC voltage elements v_3 to v_5 become equal, as shown in Fig. 8 (C). As a result, an output AC average voltage CA_{OUT} takes a constant value at all time without receiving an influence of the variation in the DC voltage V_{DC} following the variation in the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} .

[0072] When the DC voltage V_{DC} has decreased from the reference voltage V_{ref} due to a reduction in the commercial

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AC voltage V_{AC} , at step SA4, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the reference voltage V_{ref} from the reference voltage setting section 90 and the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (< the DC voltage V_{DC2}) taken in at step SA3, into the equation (1), and calculates the DC voltage correction coefficient A. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SA5. In this case, the DC voltage correction coefficient A takes a value larger than 1.

[0073] At step SA5, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the target voltage V_m taken in at step SA2 and the DC voltage correction coefficient A (> 1) calculated at step SA4, into the equation (2), thereby to calculate the corrected target voltage V_{ma} , and then proceeds to step SA6. In this case, as the DC voltage correction coefficient A takes a value larger than 1, the corrected target voltage V_{ma} becomes higher than the target voltage V_m .

[0074] At step SA6, the arithmetic processing section 100 divides the corrected target voltage V_{ma} by the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} taken in at step SA3, and obtains a PWM width W, as a result of this division. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SA7. This PWM width is larger than the PWM width W_1 shown in Fig. 8 (C).

[0075] At step SA7, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates the PWM switching pattern signal P corresponding to the PWM width (> the PWM width W_1). Next, the arithmetic processing section 100 outputs the PWM switching pattern signal P to the inverter section 60, and returns to step SA1. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 repeats making the above decision.

[0076] When the PWM switching pattern signal P has been input to the inverter section 60, the inverter section 60 converts the DC voltage V_{DC} into the output AC voltage V_{OUT} , by the PWM control of turning ON/OFF the switching element according to the PWM switching pattern signal P. The inverter section 60 supplies this output AC voltage V_{OUT} to the compressor motor 70. In this case too, the product (surface area) of the DC voltage V_{DC} and the PWM width becomes equal to the area S shown in Fig. 8. As a result, the output AC average voltage V_{AOUT} is maintained at a constant value without receiving an influence of a reduction in the DC voltage V_{DC} following the reduction in the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} .

[0077] As explained above, according to the first embodiment, the arithmetic processing section 100 corrects the PWM width based on a result (the corrected target voltage V_{ma}) of multiplying a ratio (the DC voltage correction coefficient A) of the reference voltage V_{ref} to the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} detected by the instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50, and the commercial AC voltage V_m . Therefore, it is possible to supply the output AC voltage V_{OUT} of a desired value to the compressor motor 70 without receiving an influence of the variation in the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} . As a result, it is possible to operate the compressor motor 70 in an optimum state of load characteristics and efficiency.

[0078] Further, according to the first embodiment, the reference voltage setting section 90 alters the setting of the reference voltage V_{ref} according to the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} . Therefore, it is possible to supply the output AC voltage V_{OUT} of a desired value to the compressor motor 70 in countries and regions where the power source situations (rated values, and stability, etc. of the commercial AC voltage,) are different. As a result, according to the first embodiment, it is possible to avoid the risk of the occurrence of a stalling and a stop of the compressor motor 70 due to an overcurrent attributable to a voltage shortage and an overvoltage.

[0079] Further, according to the first embodiment, the PWM width is corrected for every one-carrier period. Therefore, it is also possible to correct the ripple IR_2 included in the output AC voltage I_{OUT} as shown in Figs. 9 (C) and (D). Thus, according to the first embodiment, the ripple IR_2 (reference Fig. 9 (D)) included in the output AC voltage I_{OUT} is lowered as compared with the conventional ripple IR_2' (reference Fig. 9 (B)). As a result, it is possible to avoid the current stop due to the overcurrent attributable of the ripple, and to improve the reliability. Further, it is possible to lower the cost for reducing the ripple (the cost of an overcurrent breaking circuit, and a switching element).

[0080] Further, according to the first embodiment, the instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50 as a non-insulating circuit directly inputs the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} to the arithmetic processing section 100 via the A/D conversion port. Therefore, it is possible to shorten the detection time, as compared with the case of detecting a DC voltage by using an insulating circuit like a photo-coupler or the like.

[0081] Further, according to the first embodiment, a detection error of the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} is determined based on only the variance in the resistance of the voltage-dividing resistor 51 and the voltage-dividing resistor 52 respectively. Therefore, it is possible to detect the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} at low cost and in high precision, by only correcting the resistance.

[0082] In the first embodiment, an example of the case of calculating the corrected target voltage V_{ma} at the timing of one carrier period has been explained with reference to the flowchart shown in Fig. 5. It is also possible to calculate the corrected target voltage V_{ma} at the timing of an n- (2 or above) carrier period. This case will be explained below as a second embodiment.

[0083] Next, the operation of the second embodiment will be explained with reference to a flowchart shown in Fig. 6. An example of calculating the target voltage V_{ma} at the timing of a two-carrier period will be explained with reference to this drawing.

[0084] First, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SB1 shown in Fig. 6, and makes a decision as

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to whether the timing of a carrier period has come or not based on a result of the time measured by a timer (not shown). In this case, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "No" as a result of the decision made, and then repeats making the same decision. When the timing of the carrier period has come, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SB1, and then proceeds to step SB2. At step SB2, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the target voltage V_m from the target voltage output section 80 in a similar manner to that at step SA2, and then proceeds to step SB3.

[0085] At step SB3, the arithmetic processing section 100 makes a decision as to whether a carrier period count value n is 2 or not. The carrier period count value n is a count value of the carrier period. In this case, it is assumed that the carrier period count value n is 2. Then the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SB3, and then proceeds to step SB4. At step SB4, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes 1 into the carrier period count value n to initialize to count, and then proceeds to step SB5.

[0086] At step SB5, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} from the instantaneous DC voltage detecting section 50 in a similar manner to that in step SA3, and proceeds to step SB6. At step SB6, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the reference voltage V_{ref} from the reference voltage setting section 90 and the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} taken in at step SB5, into the above-described equation (1), and calculates the DC voltage correction coefficient A , in a similar manner to that at step SA4. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SB7.

[0087] At step SB7, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the target voltage V_m taken in at step SB2 and the DC voltage correction coefficient A calculated at step SB6, into the above-described equation (2), thereby to calculate the corrected target voltage V_{ma} , in a similar manner to that at step SA5, and then proceeds to step SB8.

[0088] At step SB8, the arithmetic processing section 100 divides the corrected target voltage V_{ma} by the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} (= the DC voltage V_{DC}) taken in at step SB5, and obtains a PWM width, in a similar manner to that at step SA6. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SB9. At step SB9, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates the PWM switching pattern signal P corresponding to the PWM width. Next, the arithmetic processing section 100 outputs the PWM switching pattern signal P to the inverter section 60, and returns to step SB1. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 repeats making the above decision.

[0089] When the PWM switching pattern signal P has been input to the inverter section 60, the inverter section 60 converts the DC voltage V_{DC} into the output AC voltage V_{OUT} , by the PWM control of turning ON/OFF the switching element according to the PWM switching pattern signal P , in a similar manner to that described above. The inverter section 60 supplies this output AC voltage V_{OUT} to the compressor motor 70. In this case, the output AC average voltage V_{AOUT} of the output AC voltage V_{OUT} takes a constant value without receiving an influence of the variation in the DC voltage V_{DC} following the variation in the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} .

[0090] When the next timing of the carrier period has come, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SB1, and then proceeds to step SB2. At step SB2, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the target voltage V_m from the target voltage output section 80, in a similar manner to that at step SA2, and then proceeds to step SB3.

[0091] At step SB3, the arithmetic processing section 100 makes a decision as to whether the carrier period count value n is 2 or not. In this case, as the carrier period count value n is 1, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SB3, and proceeds to step SB10. At step SB10, the arithmetic processing section 100 increments the carrier period count value n ($= 1$) by one, and then proceeds to step SA7.

[0092] At step SB7, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the target voltage V_m taken in at step SB2 and the DC voltage correction coefficient A calculated at the last carrier period timing, into the above-described equation (2), thereby to calculate the corrected target voltage V_{ma} , in a similar manner to that at step SA5, and then proceeds to step SB8.

[0093] At step SB8, the arithmetic processing section 100 calculates a PWM width in a similar manner to that at step SA6, and then proceeds to step SB9. At step SB9, the arithmetic processing section 100 generates the PWM switching pattern signal P corresponding to the PWM width. Next, the arithmetic processing section 100 outputs the PWM switching pattern signal P to the inverter section 60, and returns to step SB1. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 repeats making the above decision.

[0094] When the next timing of the carrier period has come, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made at step SB1, and then proceeds to step SB2. At step SB2, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the target voltage V_m from the target voltage output section 80, in a similar manner to that at step SA2, and then proceeds to step SB3.

[0095] At step SB3, as the carrier period count value n is 2, the arithmetic processing section 100 sets "Yes" as a result of the decision made, and then proceeds to step SB4. At step SB4, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes 1 into the carrier period count value n to initialize the count, and then proceeds to step SB5. At step SB5, the arithmetic processing section 100 takes in the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DCS} in a similar manner to that in step SA3, and proceeds to step SB6. At step SB6, the arithmetic processing section 100 substitutes the reference voltage V_{ref}

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from the reference voltage setting section 90 and the instantaneous DC voltage V_{DC} taken in at step SB5, into the above-described equation (1), and calculates a new DC voltage correction coefficient A, in a similar manner to that at step SA4. Then, the arithmetic processing section 100 proceeds to step SB7. In other words, the DC voltage correction coefficient A is calculated only at every two-carrier period. Thereafter, the above-described operation is repeated at step SA7 and afterwards.

[0096] As explained above, according to the second embodiment, the DC voltage correction coefficient A is calculated for every n carrier periods. Therefore, it is possible to decrease the number of calculating the DC voltage correction coefficient A per unit time, as compared with the case of calculating the DC voltage correction coefficient A for every one period like in the first embodiment. As the correction can be realized by the low-cost arithmetic processing section 100 at a slow processing speed, it is possible to lower the cost.

[0097] Particularly, when the carrier frequency is to be set high based on the request for reducing the noise of the compressor motor 70 and for improving the precision of the waveform of the output AC voltage V_{OUT} , the method of correcting the PWM width for every n -carrier period greatly contributes to the cost reduction.

[0098] While the first and second embodiments of the present invention have been explained in detail above with reference to the drawings, detailed structure examples are not limited to the first and second embodiments. Any other design modifications within the range not deviating from the gist of the present invention are all included in the present invention.

[0099] For example, the square-waveform PWM system as shown in Fig. 8 (C) has been explained as an example in the first and second embodiments. However, it is also possible to obtain similar effects to those of the first and second embodiments when a sinusoidal wave-approximated PWM system for controlling the motor and the compressor motor is employed as the PWM system.

[0100] Further, in the first embodiment, a description has been made of the case where the reference voltage setting section 90 sets the reference voltage V_{ref} (reference Figs. 2 (A) to (C)) corresponding to the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} . However, it is also possible to set the voltage corresponding to the power source situations of each country or region (the commercial AC voltage V_{AC} is always low (or high)), as the reference voltage V_{ref} .

[0101] As explained above, according to the inverter control apparatus of the present invention, it is possible to supply an output AC voltage of a desired value to the AC load without receiving an influence of the variation in the commercial AC voltage. As a result, there is an effect that it is possible to operate the AC load in an optimum state of load characteristics and efficiency.

[0102] Further, the correcting unit corrects the pulse width based on a result of multiplying a ratio of a reference voltage to a detection result of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit, and a target voltage. Therefore, it is possible to supply an output AC voltage of a desired value to the AC load without receiving an influence of the variation in the commercial AC voltage. As a result, there is an effect that it is possible to operate the AC load in an optimum state of load characteristics and efficiency.

[0103] Further, the setting changing unit alters the setting of the reference voltage according to the commercial AC voltage. Therefore, it is possible to supply an output AC voltage of a desired value to the AC load in countries and regions where the power source situations (rated values, and stability, etc. of a commercial AC voltage,) are different. As a result, there is an effect that it is possible to operate the AC load in an optimum state regardless of countries and regions.

[0104] Further, the pulse width is corrected for every one period of a modulation carrier. Therefore, as the influence of the ripple included in the commercial AC voltage is reduced, there is an effect that it is possible to avoid a current breaking due to an overcurrent attributable to the ripple, and it is also possible to increase the reliability. Further, there is an effect that it is possible to lower the cost (an overcurrent breaking circuit) for avoiding the ripple.

[0105] Further, the ratio (a reference voltage / a detection result of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit) is calculated for every n periods of a modulation carrier. Therefore, it is possible to decrease the number of calculating the ratio per unit time, as compared with the case of calculating the ratio for every one period. As a result, there is an effect that it is possible to lower the cost, as the correction can be realized by a low-cost arithmetic and logic unit.

[0106] Further, there is an effect that it is possible to shorten the detection time, as compared with the case of detecting a DC voltage using an insulating circuit like a photo-coupler or the like.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

[0107] As explained above, the inverter control apparatus relating to the present invention is useful for the air conditioner that is used in countries and regions where the power source situations (rated values, and stability, etc. of a commercial AC voltage,) are different.

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Claims

1. An inverter control apparatus comprising:

5 a converting unit which converts a commercial AC voltage into a DC voltage;
an inverting unit which converts the DC voltage into an output AC voltage of a predetermined frequency by a
pulse-width modulation system based on an assigned pulse width, and supplies the output AC voltage to an
AC load;
10 an instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit which detects an instantaneous value of the DC voltage; and
a correcting unit which corrects the pulse width so as to maintain the output AC voltage at a desired value
following the variation in a result of a detection by the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit.

2. The inverter control apparatus according to claim 1,

15 wherein the correcting unit corrects the pulse width based on a result of multiplying a ratio of a preset reference voltage to a detection result of the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit, and a target voltage as a target value of the output AC voltage.

3. The inverter control apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a setting changing unit which changes a
20 setting of the reference voltage according to the commercial AC voltage.

4. The inverter control apparatus according to claim 2,

wherein the correcting unit corrects the pulse width by calculating the ratio for every one period of a modulation carrier in the pulse-width modulation system.

5. The inverter control apparatus according to claim 2,

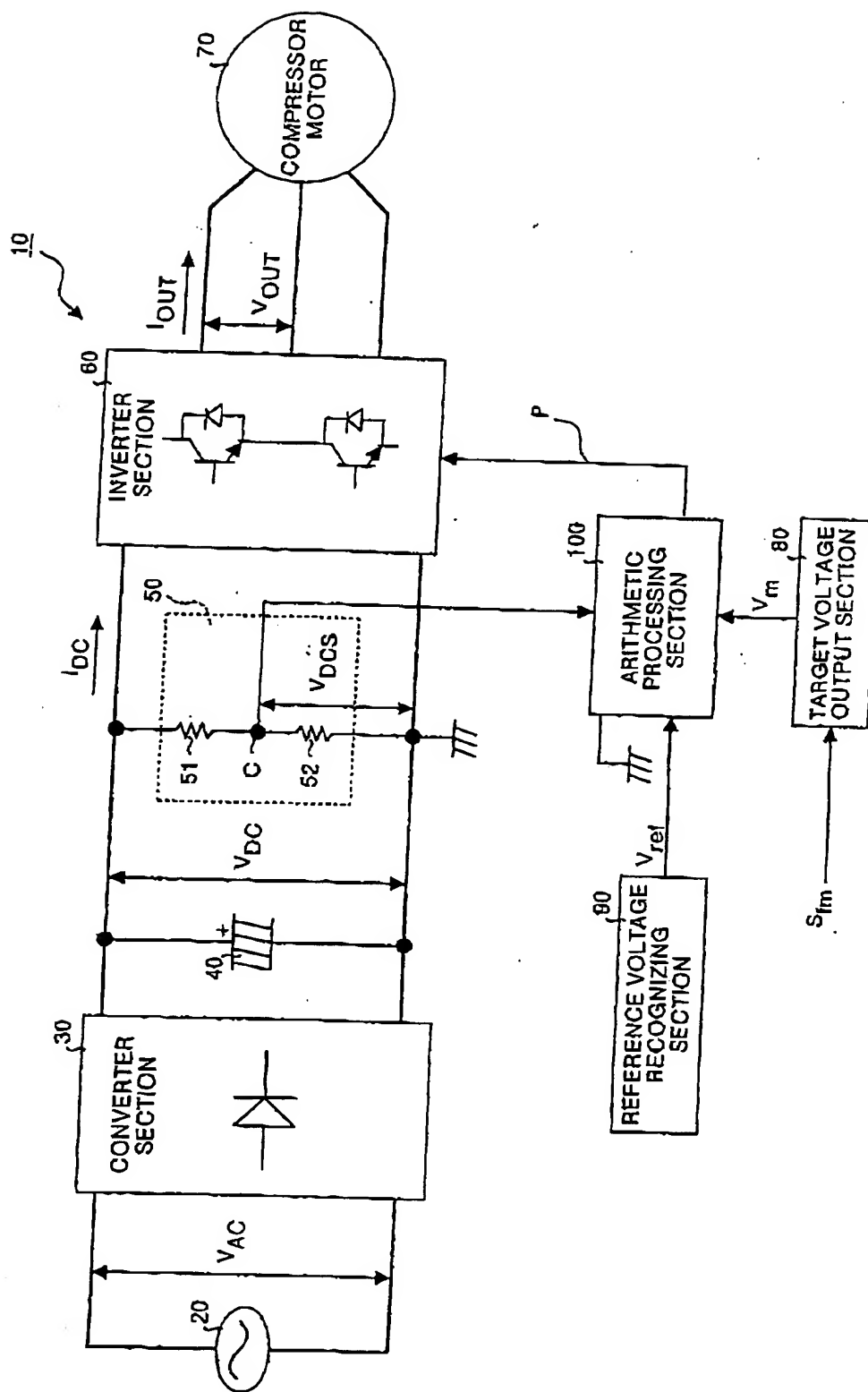
25 wherein the correcting unit corrects the pulse width by calculating the ratio for every n periods (= equal to or above 2) of a modulation carrier in the pulse-width modulation system.

6. The inverter control apparatus according to claim 1,

30 wherein the instantaneous DC voltage detecting unit directly detects the DC voltage by a non-insulating circuit that has been grounded to be in a potential common to that of the correcting unit.

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FIG.1



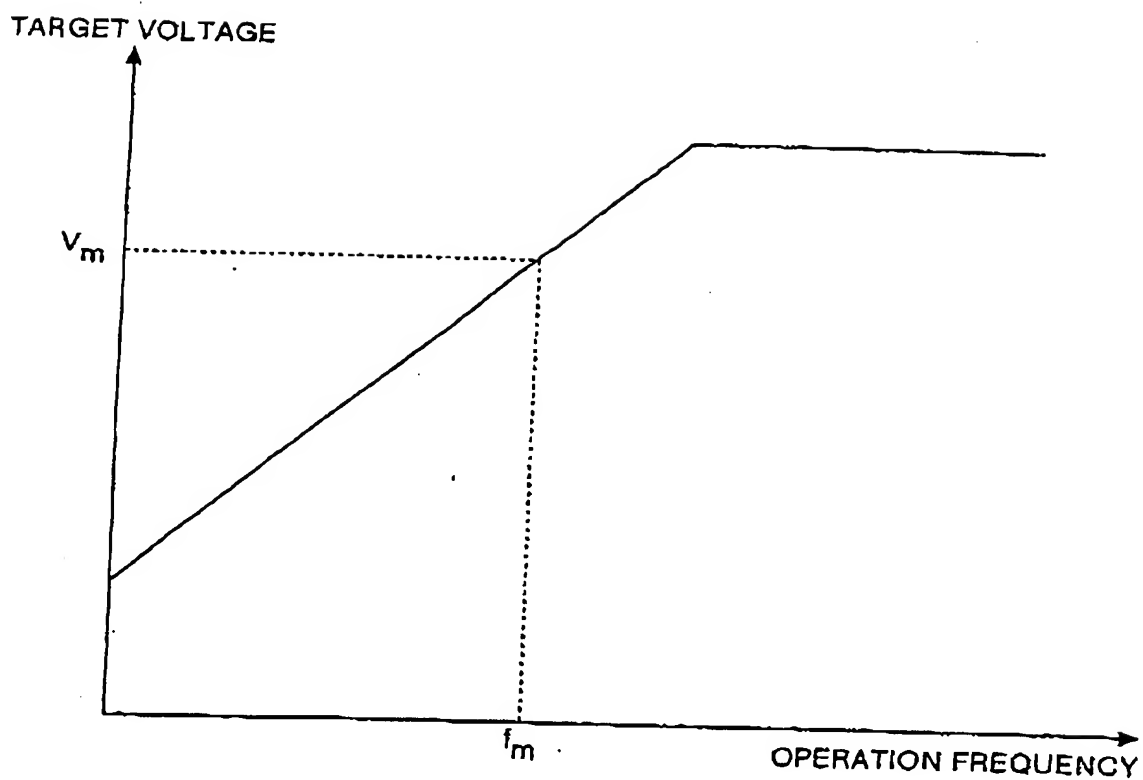
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FIG.2

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|
| (A) | POWER SOURCE VOLTAGE IN EUROPE
REFERENCE VOLTAGE V_{ref} | 220 TO 240 V \pm 10%
230X1.414 |
| (B) | POWER SOURCE VOLTAGE IN CHINA
REFERENCE VOLTAGE V_{ref} | 220V \pm 10%
220X1.414 |
| (C) | POWER SOURCE VOLTAGE IN
AUSTRALIA REFERENCE VOLTAGE V_{ref} | 240V \pm 10%
240X1.414 |

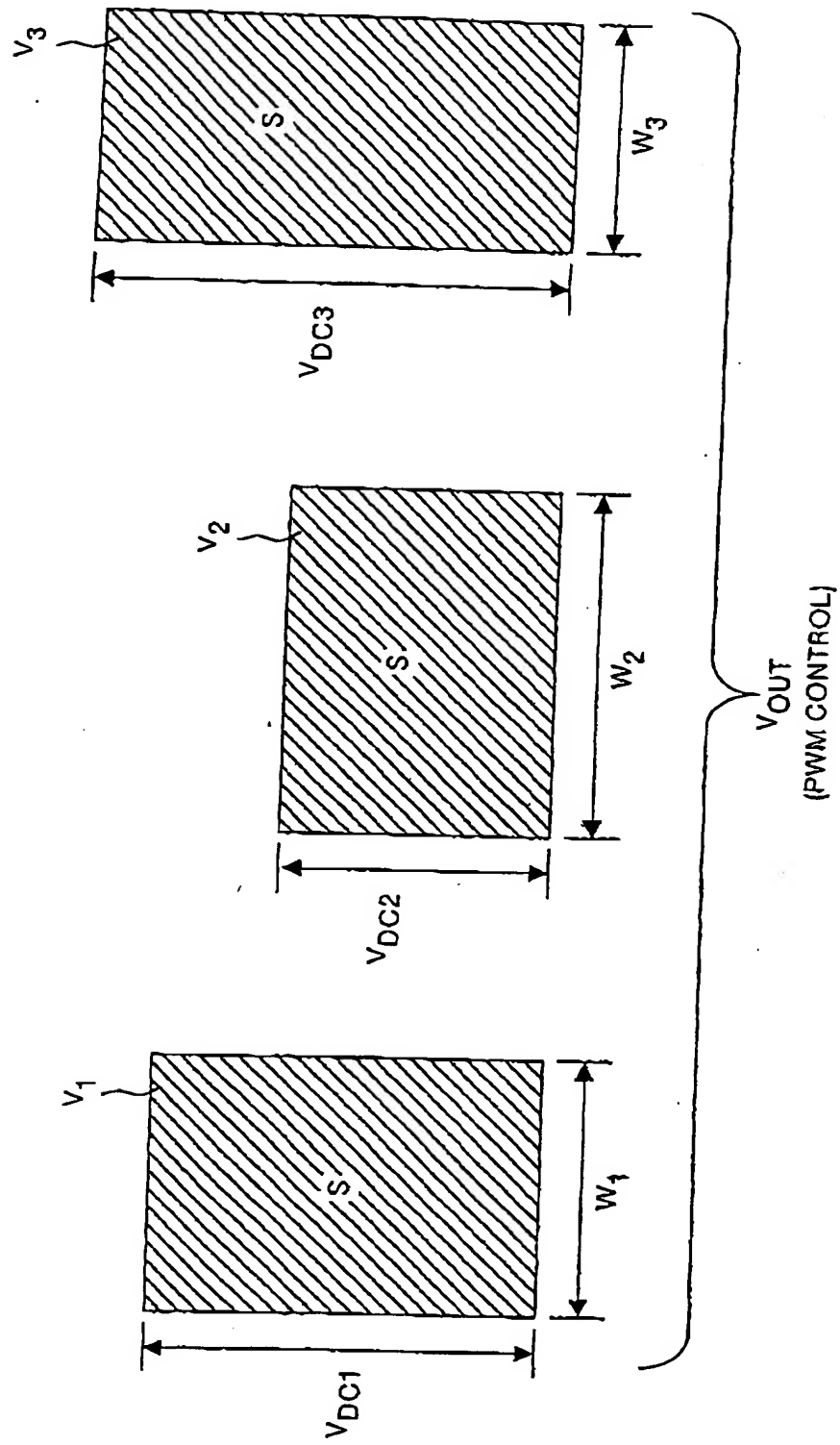
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FIG.3



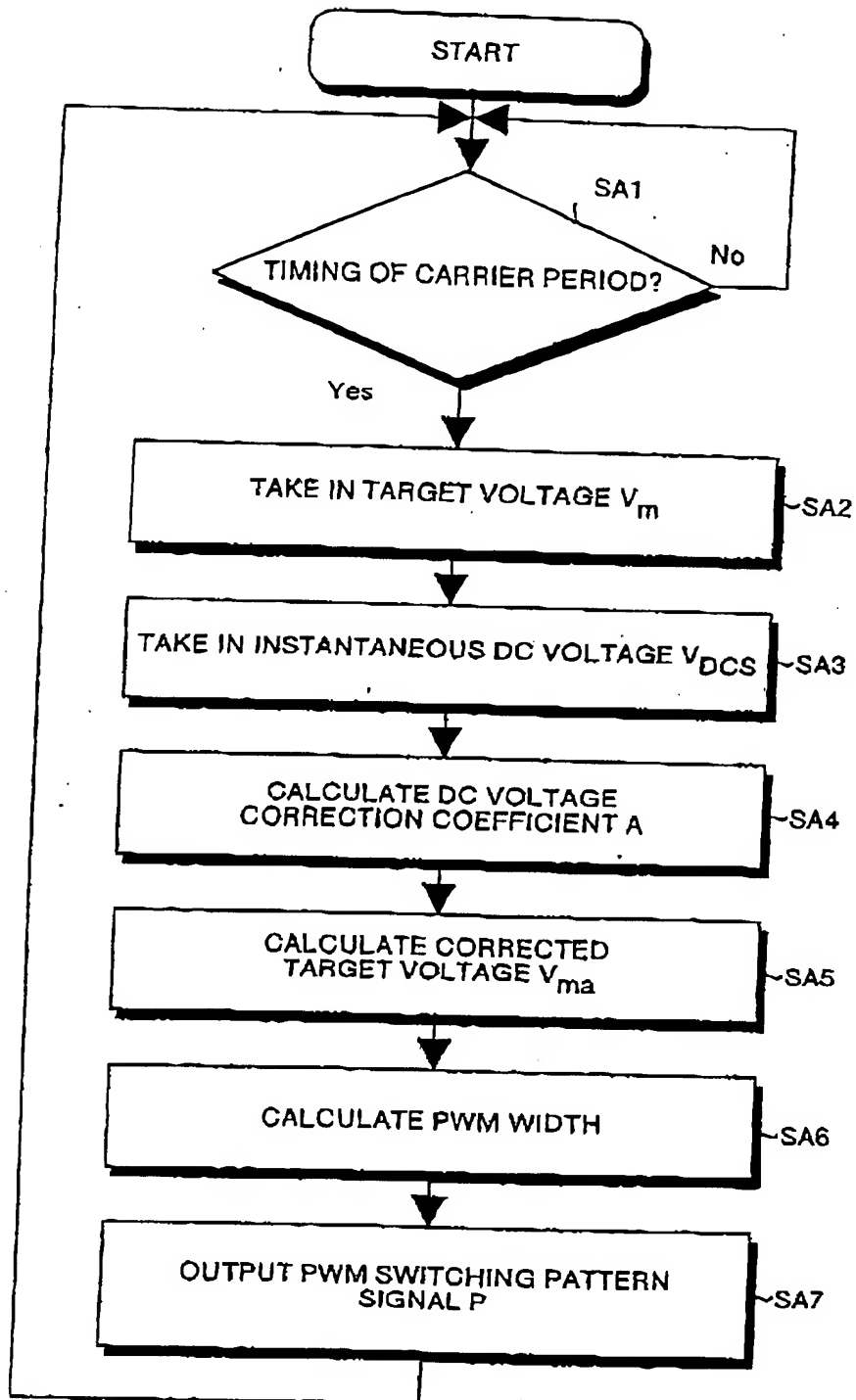
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FIG.4



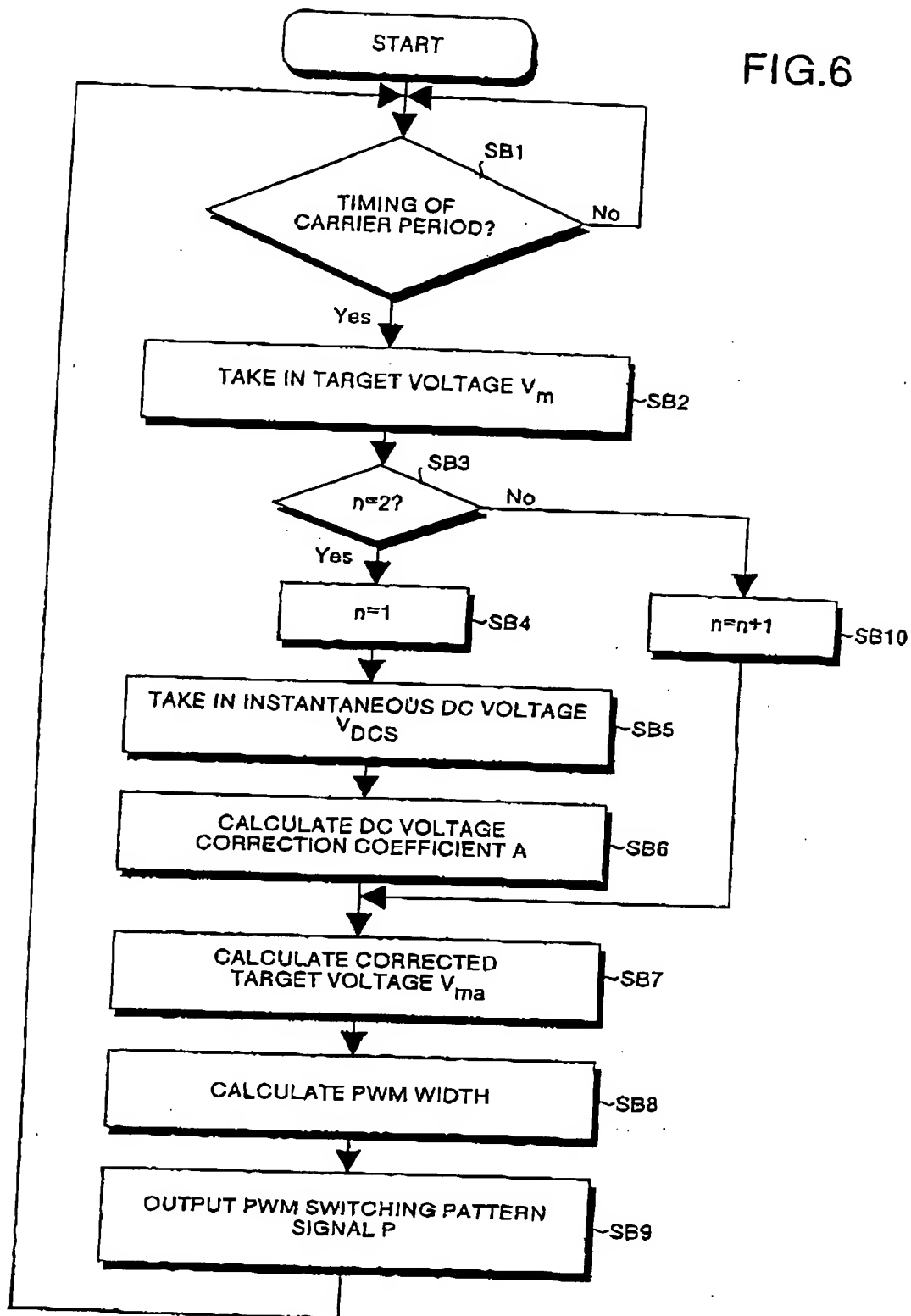
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FIG.5



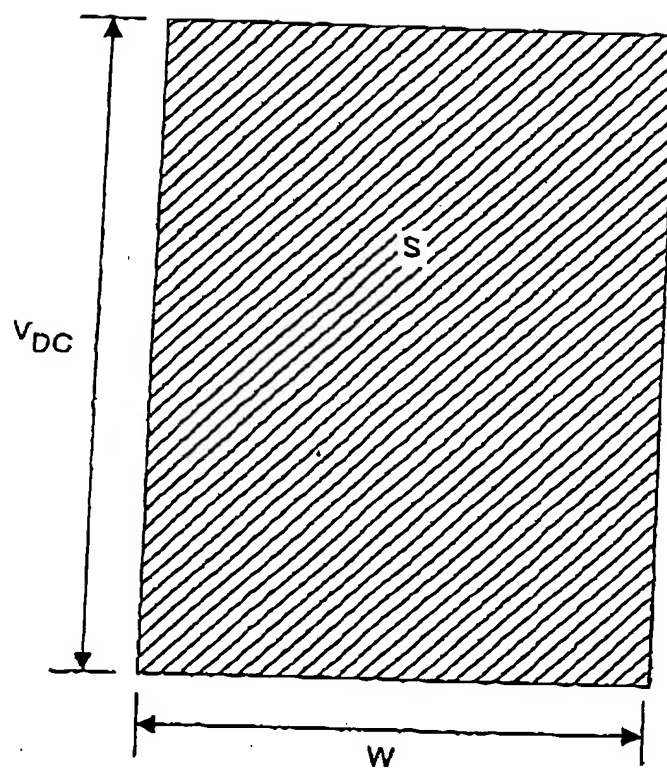
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FIG.6

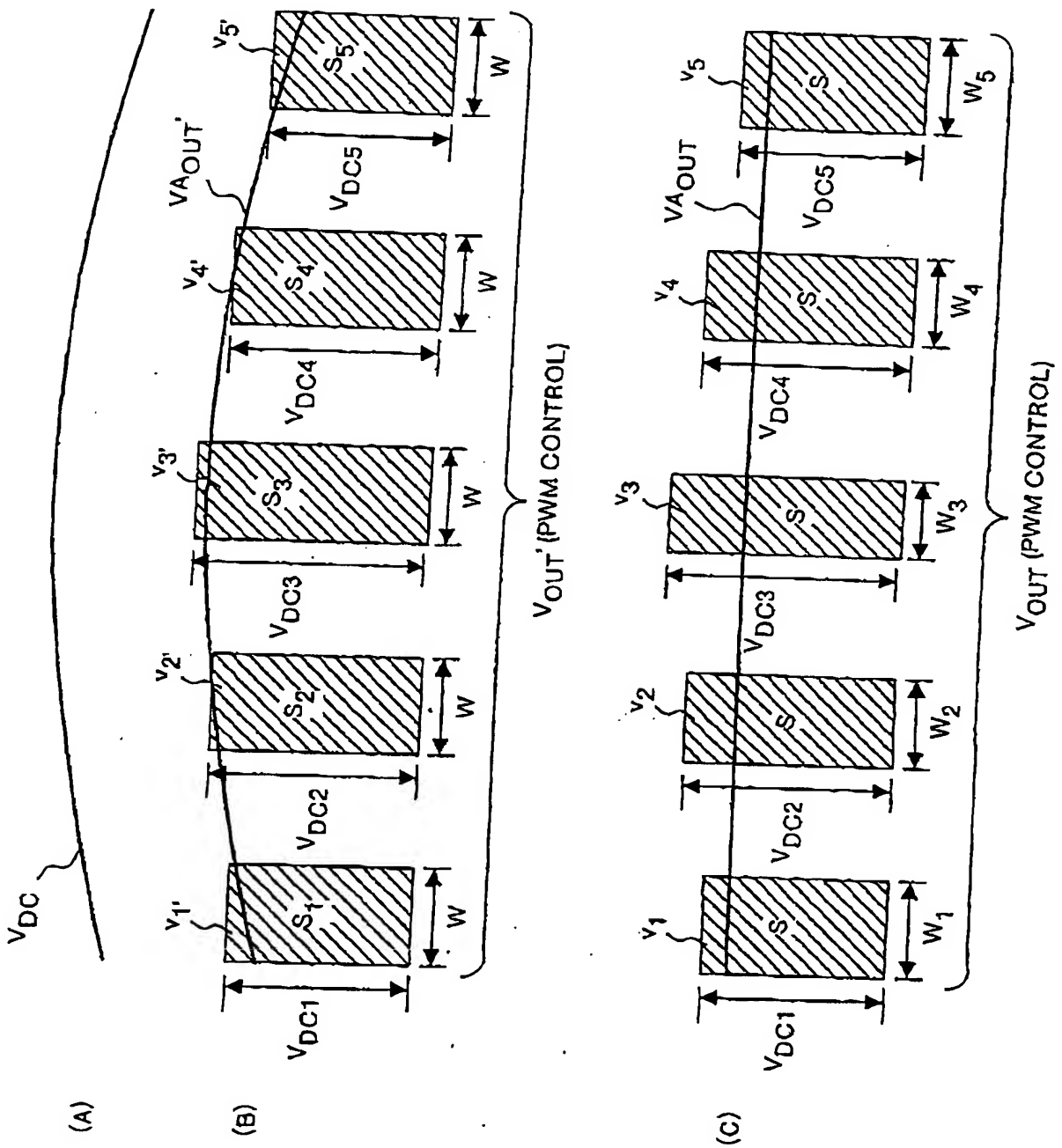


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FIG.7

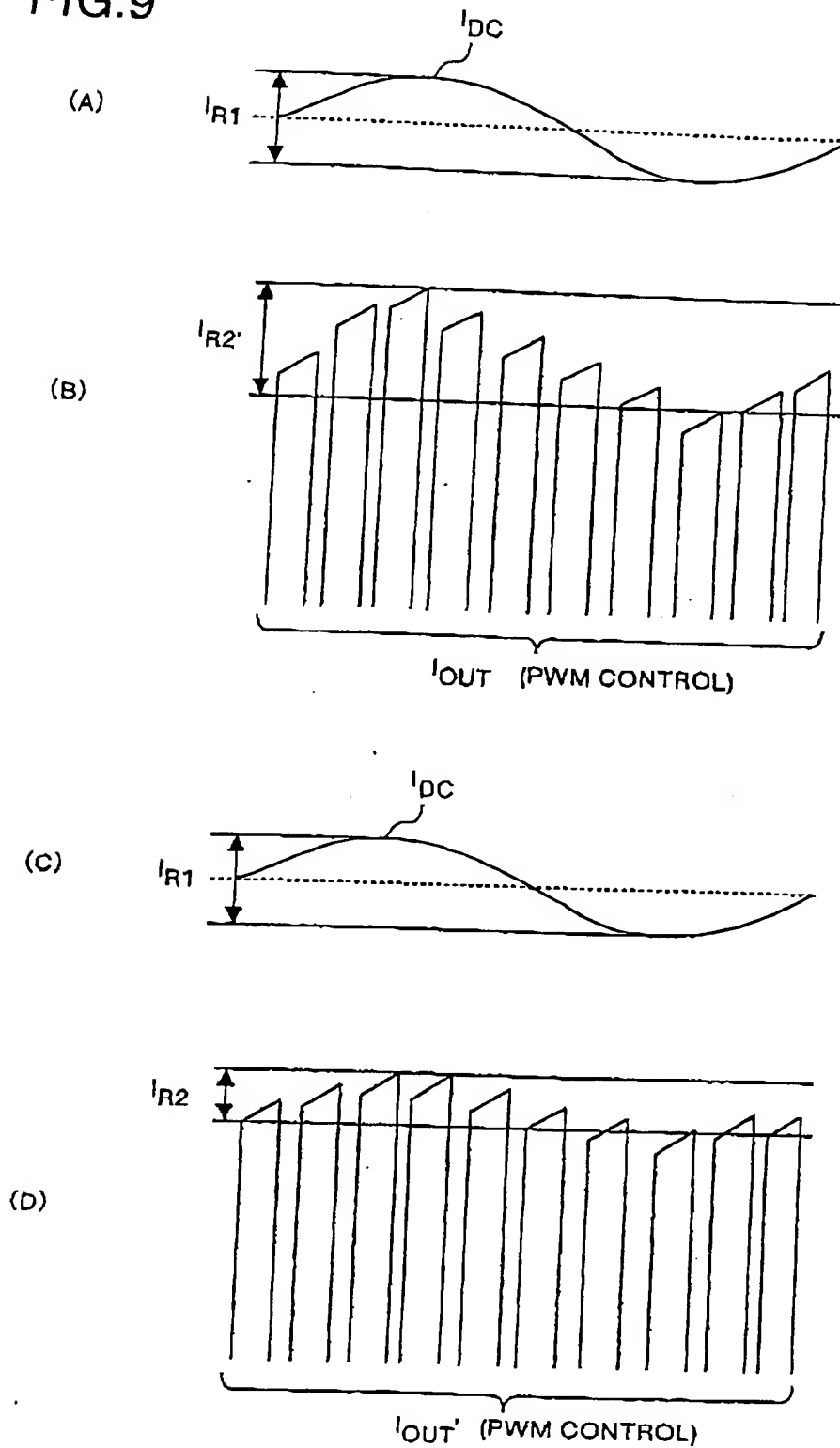


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FIG.9



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER Int.Cl. ⁷ H02M 7/48		International application No. PCT/JP99/06643
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) Int.Cl. ⁷ H02M 7/42-7/98		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1926-1996 Tokoku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1994-2000 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971-2000 Jitsuyo Shinan Tokoku Koho 1996-2000		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	JP, 5-33698, U (Mitsubishi Electric Corporation), 30 April, 1993 (30.04.93), Par. Nos. 0002 to 0008; Fig. 4 (Family: none)	1, 2 3-6 5
Y	JP, 1-91666, A (Shinko Electric Co., Ltd.), 11 April, 1989 (11.04.89), page 2; Fig. 3 (Family: none)	3
Y	US, 5481451, A (Alex Electronics Corp.), 02 January, 1996 (02.01.96), Columns 13-18; Figs. 15 to 22b & JP, 6-153534, A	4
Y	JP, 4-364395, A (Matsushita Electric Ind. Co., Ltd.), 16 December, 1992 (16.12.92), Fig. 1 (Family: none)	6
A	JP, 1-144365, A (Mitsubishi Electric Corporation), 06 June, 1989 (06.06.89), Fig. 3 (Family: none)	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later documents published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, each combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 18 February, 2000 (18.02.00)		Date of mailing of the international search report 29 February, 2000 (29.02.00)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office		Authorized officer
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